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Book No. 1, 30th Construction Battalion (Special), section 1

# THIRTIETH SPECIAL SEABEES SECTION ONE



DEDICATED TO  
THE OFFICERS AND MEN  
OF THE  
**30<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION**  
AND TO THEIR DUTY IN  
**THE EUROPEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS**  
**1944-1945**



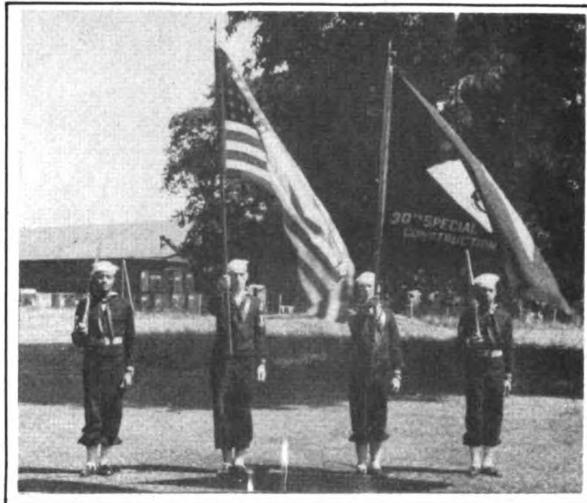
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U.S. NAVAL CENSOR NUMBER 102

Gentleman  
2-18-52  
Engineering Det  
88  
Admiral C. H.  
Cattell  
5-24-46

# 30<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SECTION 1

D  
769.552  
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On the rainy morning of April 3, 1944, the peaceful stillness that is peculiar to unoccupied buildings and areas was shattered by the arrival of a number of large trucks filled with cargo, human and baggage, in Area A-10, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Thus the 30th Special U. S. Naval Construction Battalion received its start.

After the usual confusion that is prevalent when a new organization is established, the battalion settled down to a training program which would enable it to perform the expected duties on arrival in advanced overseas areas. Drill and combat defense tactics were taught by battle seasoned marines; skilled mechanics attended schools in water purification, rope and wire splicing, and various skills for which a working knowledge was required for the operation and maintenance of an advanced base. overshadowing these special schools was the actual stevedoring experience given the gangs of each company by instructors whose knowledge of handling cargo had been gained in civilian life and was augmented by actual wartime experience at naval advanced bases. Many a member of this outfit will remember with pleasure, or otherwise, their first meeting with the U.S.S. NEVERSAIL, the training ship on which they were changed from groups of men into smooth working cargo specialists.

2-9-51 m 70

Finally on May 10, 1944, after days of rehearsal for the event, the battalion was formally commissioned by Captain J. G. Ware, Commanding Officer of Camp Peary, and Lieutenant Commander J. Kask took command of the battalion. Our colors were received and from that date the 30th Special U. S. Naval Construction Battalion existed as a recognized and operating unit, the last of the construction battalions to be trained and commissioned at Camp Peary. In his commissioning speech, Captain J. G. Ware, complimented the officers and men very highly, and stated the outfit had the appearance of being one of the best units he had commissioned.

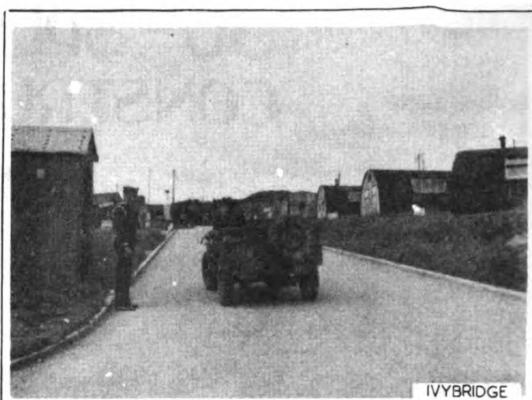
During the week following, classes, schools and drills continued as usual, but the minds of everyone were focused on the long awaited, embarkation leave. On the morning of May 17th, all, except "west-coasters" departed, leaving the area to that portion of the battalion who were to receive their embarkation leave upon our arrival at Port Hueneme, California.

On the morning of May 27th, all had returned, and everyone was ready for our ultimate assignment. But, instead of proceeding to the West Coast as all previous special battalions had done, our P.O.E. was designated as Camp Thomas, Davisville, R.I. We arrived there on the morning of May 30th and were immediately quartered alongside experienced battalions who were at that time awaiting reassignment. After approximately one month the 30th Special was divided into two sections, our present unit being designated as the 30th Special U. S. Naval Construction Battalion, Section One; comprising one half of the original headquarters company, and two

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ccompanies "A" and "D" in their entirety. Due to Lieutenant Commander Kask's illness he was relieved and the unit was placed under command of Lieutenant Commander Gerard R. Crosby and started operating as Section One on July 2, 1944.

On July 7th the battalion was ordered to report to the U.S. Naval Advanced Base Assembly & Training Unit, Lido Beach, Long Island, N. Y. Departing from Camp Thomas after the well remembered two mile march to the train, the unit arrived at Lido Beach late that evening. There we became a part of the organization known as "THF DRFWs". Their purpose was to be the operation and maintenance of three large French seaports, which, at that time were in German hands. Section One was to augment whatever local talent that could be acquired for the stevedoring operations of the ports. During the stop-over at Lido Beach, the unit underwent further advanced training, practiced initial landing operations, and close order drill. In several reviews the 30th Special, Section One was adjudged the best marching outfit attached to "THF DRFWs".



IVYBRIDGE



CAMP EFFORD — PLYMOUTH

On July 23rd the battalion was confined to the base and at last, all the personnel eager for the trip overseas, had their wishes fulfilled - at last we were going places. On the morning of July 25th, after a 0430 reveille, all hands, with rifles, packs, and other gear were assembled on the drill field. After a two mile march, and a short train ride, the unit crossed the Hudson River by ferry boat, and upon arriving on the opposite shore, became acquainted with the ship that was to be our home for the next twelve days, namely, the "U S S LEJEUNE". For the majority of the outfit this was their first glimpse, much less the first time they had ever been aboard an ocean going vessel. Embarkation was accomplished in short order and soon everyone was bunked and had started exploring the mysteries of an ocean going vessel. Ironically enough, the "U S S LEJEUNE", named after a famous Marine Corps general, was a German supply ship, captured in the historical battle of the "GRAF SPEE". Now, after re-conversion she was engaged in taking the war against her former owners.

On the morning of July 26th, at 0930 everyone was ordered below decks. Shortly thereafter, could be heard the throb of powerful engines and with the slight vibration and sway of the ship, all hands knew that at last they were on their way to fulfill the mission for which they had been formed. Before leaving New York Harbor, the decks were opened to passenger personnel and everyone was allowed a final look at the Statue of Liberty and the shores of our homeland. Later in the day our ship was joined by various other ships and slowly we became the center and lead ship in the convoy that formed. Gradually everyone settled down to shipboard routine and adjusted himself for the long weary days and nights ahead. The crossing was smooth and uneventful, the monotony of shipboard wartime passenger life being relieved by the numerous fire and abandon ship drills which occurred almost daily. Boxing matches were held each even-on the aft deck, and the Thirtieth's Dance Band, augmented by various members of the ship's crew and passengers provid-



U.S.N.A.S.B. EXETER

ed informal "jam" sessions to the delight of everyone. It is needless to state that a few of our members found life aboard a ship not at all conducive to their good health, however, no serious or lasting effects were observed.

In the afternoon of August 6, sharp-eyed voluntary lookouts or spotters, sighted something that was immediately identified as land, a welcome sight to the land loving branch of the Navy known as SEABEES. During the afternoon our ship dropped anchor in the beautiful bay just off Greenock, Scotland, and the next morning it continued up the Clyde River to Glasgow.

Upon our arrival, it was found that the unit would be divided into two sections for the train trip to Plymouth, England. One section was to pass through Edinburgh, New-



FORE STREET CAMP — PLYMOUTH



THE CATHEDRAL—EXETER

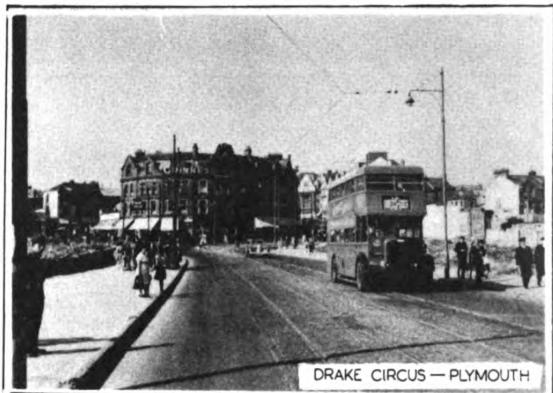
castle, Yorkshire, Nottingham, Swindon and the other section was to take an entirely different route, Carlisle, Carew, Bristol, Exeter and finally Plymouth in sunny Devon. Personnel of both sections obtained a favorable and lasting impression of England from the train trips.

By truck the outfit was moved from Plymouth Station to a camp just on the outskirts of Ivybridge, where we were to remain until the middle of October 1944. Life there was pleasant and serene, marred only by the occurrence of two alerts for shipment to the far-shore that never materialized. The local people of the village of Ivybridge were very hospitable and many long lasting friendships were formed. It was during this period that the unit was given its first assignments in stevedoring activities, the purpose we were originally intended.

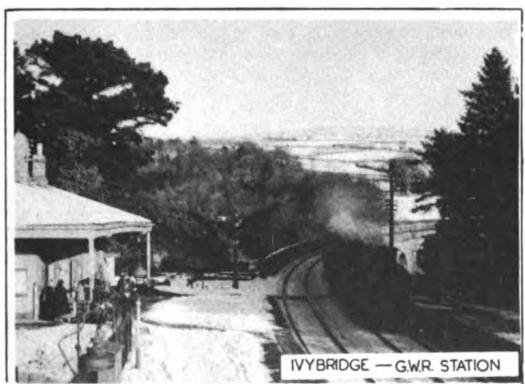
On October 13, 1944, the unit was moved to Camp Efford, not far from Plymouth. Quarters and camp facilities in

general were the best that were encountered so far and everyone was deeply appreciative of the living conditions afforded by the camp. One had to admit the future looked pretty gloomy for recreation while at Ivybridge, but changes were made and the three movies a week evolved into three shows a day in the theater at Camp Efford. The library outgrew the packing-case stage and developed into one of many shelves.

Although the fourteen piece orchestra had been lost as a result of the battalion split, Section One fared well as the newly formed seven piece combination added more and different arrangements to its library. This seven piece combination took the honors in the Army Special Services Band Contest and won for itself the title "Biggest Little Band in the ETO". It made a number of radio broadcast and provided music for numerous battalion dances at Borington Hall, Ivybridge, North Road School in Plymouth and Buller Hall in Exeter, as well as the social functions



DRAKE CIRCUS—PLYMOUTH



IVYBRIDGE—GWR STATION

of other U.S. Navy activities all over southern England.

Christmas time was given an added sparkle through the efforts of the Recreation Department. Highlights were the show in the Camp Efford Theater with the band, quartettes, and other features; the Christmas party for the children at Plympton and vicinity at which Headquarters Company played Santa Claus; and the terrific Christmas dinner - thanks to the cooks and bakers.

Transportation had a good deal to do with all of our ventures. The regular liberty runs were supplemented by runs to the battalion dances, sight-seeing tours through Dartmoor Forest and that Saturday night feature - - the liberty bus to Torquay.

Stevedoring operations and various work details continued and all members of the battalion can be proud of the part the stevedore gangs played in keeping supplies moving to France to support the fast moving advance our forces were

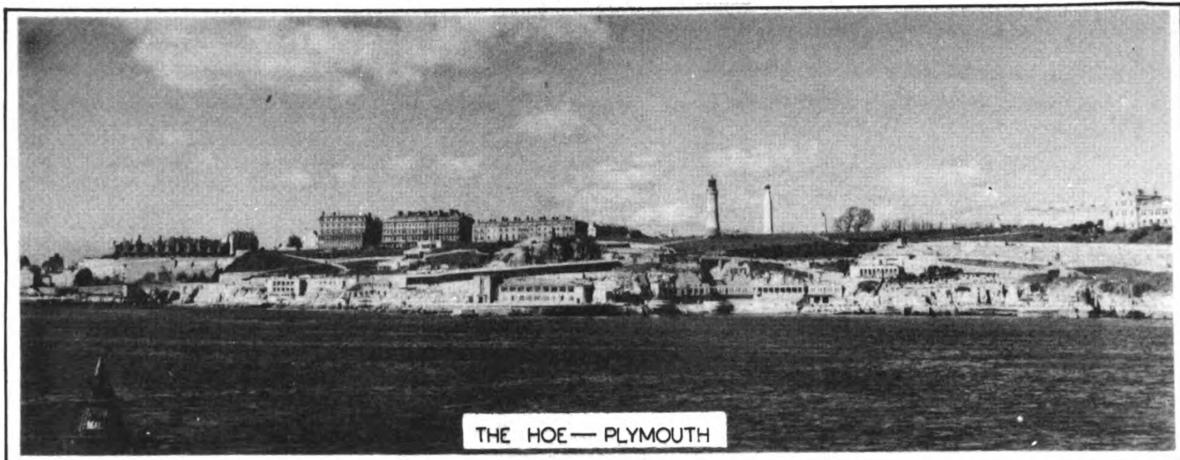
making at that time. No job was too small or too big for our gangs to tackle, and the spirit that instigated the expression "CAN DO" of the earlier battalions, was exemplified in true form by our work during this period.

On April 8, 1945, a detachment of the unit, consisting of five officers and two hundred thirty men were ordered to Rosneath, Scotland, for further assignment to a proposed base in Germany, however, the plans were changed and the unit finished their duty in Scotland by assisting in closing of the Rosneath base. The detachment returned May 20th and joined the main group at Camp Efford.

On June 1st 1945, the unit was assigned to relieve the 10th Special U.S. Naval Construction Battalion, Section Two, at the United States Naval Advanced Amphibious Supply Base, Exeter, England. Approximately two hundred men were left at Fore-street camp at Plymouth, while the main portion of the battalion went to Exeter.



CAMP EFFORD



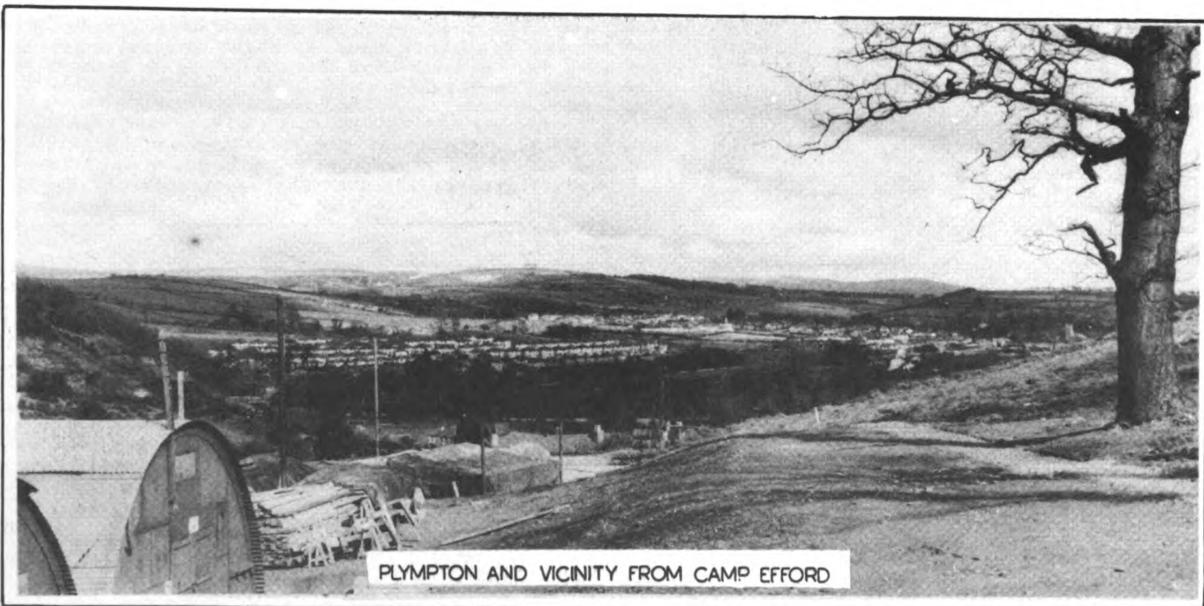
THE HOE—PLYMOUTH

Taking a glance into the sports section it's an established fact that the battalion came out on top. Ping-pong, volley ball, basketball, baseball, football, and boxing equipment were available for anyone's use 'n leisure time. The basketball team took first place in the Plymouth Area finals. One of our fighters won the Junior Welter-weight Boxing Championship for the U. K., and the baseball teams gave other teams a run for their money on diamonds in both Scotland and England. Speaking in terms of sports and recreation, it is difficult to determine where those walks through the English countryside so many of the fellows were seen taking, should be listed. Were they sport OR recreation??

From the day of the first review in Camp Peary, the battalion was noted for a brilliant performance in every parade or review in which it participated,--Peary, Thomas, Lido Beach and Roseneath. Spotlighted at each one was the trick drill team and crack drill platoon, who marched with military precision typical of the whole outfit. For the men whose interests were other than sports, reading, liberty and walks in the country, - a favorite pastime was "hobby-lobby" where individual creativeness and artistry turned out all sorts of souvenirs from all sorts of materials.

At the time of this writing, scuttlebutt (ever heard of it?) has been passed that quite a number of battalion personnel will be returned to the United States in the near future for leave and eventual reassignment to a place called the Pacific where it has been rumored there is some more work to do. Those of the unit who are left in the United Kingdom, will probably remain in Exeter for the duration.

To those of the 30th Special, Section One, all that can be said is, "It wasn't so bad, after all, was it?"



PLYMPTON AND VICINITY FROM CAMP EFFORD

## COMMANDING OFFICER

Lieutenant Commander Gerard R. Crosby, affectionately known and referred to as "The Skipper" comes from Seattle, Washington. He served in the U. S. Naval Reserve in the last war as Lieutenant on board various troop transports. After the war and up to 1929 Lieutenant Commander Crosby served with a steamship company operating in the Pacific. Retiring from the sea in 1929 he became associated with the Board of Marine Underwriters of San Francisco, Inc., and remained in that capacity until his re-entry in the U. S. Naval Reserve in May 1944.

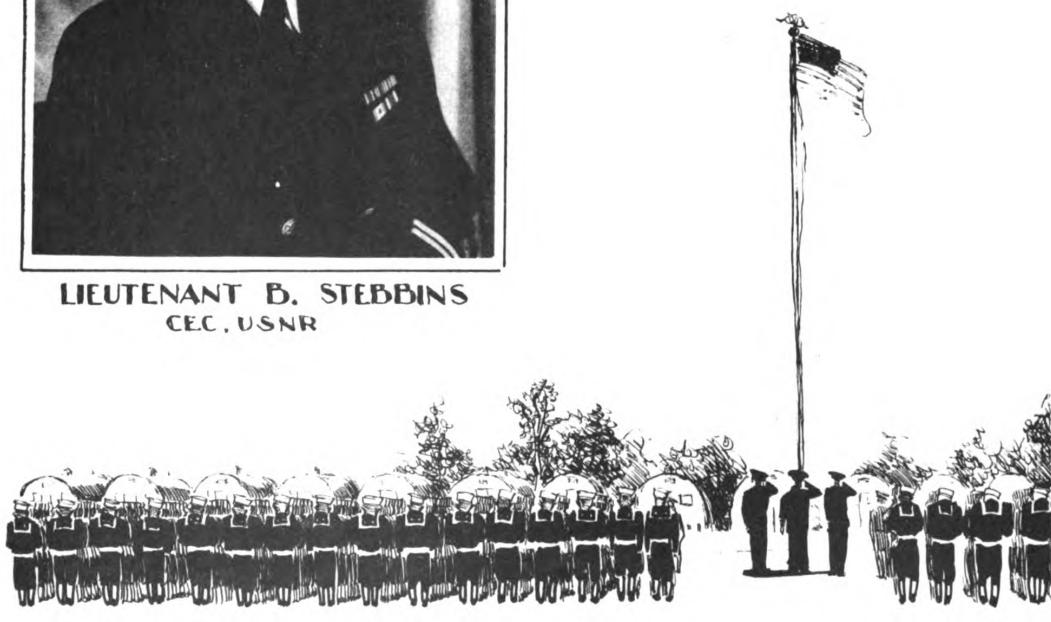


## EXECUTIVE OFFICER



LIEUTENANT B. STEBBINS  
CEC. USNR

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER  
GERARD R. CROSBY  
CEC (S) USNR



# BATTALION PERSONNEL



## BATTALION OFFICERS

Gerard R. Crosby...Lieutenant-Commander CEC (S)

Blanchard Stebbins.....Lieutenant CEC

Sidney L. Crawford.....Lieutenant

Joseph L. Butler.....Lieutenant MC

Joseph H. Hardiman.....Lieutenant DC

Stanley G. Fox.....Lieutenant (jg) SC

Lawrence W. Pate..Lieutenant (jg) CEC (S)

Wesley F. Arnold..Lieutenant (jg) CEC (S)

Arthur W. Le Sac..Lieutenant (jg) CEC (S)

Hugh C. Clagett.....Lieutenant (jg) CEC

William E. Robinson..Chief Carpenter CEC (S)

John A. Rascoll..Chief Carpenter CEC (S)

John H. Behlau...Chief Carpenter CEC (S)

William H. Savage.....Carpenter CEC (S)

### Officers Detached:

William G. Turner.....Lieutenant CEC (S)

Raymond J. Mc Carthy.....Lieutenant MC

James E. Giberson.....Lieutenant (jg)

Ora J. Wheeler...Lieutenant (jg) CEC (S)

Duane C. Bogie.....Ensign CEC (S)

Mont F. Edge.....Boatswain





HUT NO. 122—EXETER



HUT NO. 19—FORE STREET



HUT NO. 120—EXETER

HUT NO. 123—EXETER



HUT NO. 121—EXETER





HUT NO. 112—EXETER



HUT NO. 114—EXETER



HUT NO. 113—EXETER



HUT NO. 109A—EXETER

HUT NO. 119—EXETER

HUT NO. 114 A—EXETER



HUT NO. 115—EXETER

HUT NO. 111—EXETER



HUT NO. 110—EXETER



HUT NO.10-FORE STREET



HUT NO.12-FORE STREET



HUT NO.5-FORE STREET



HUT NO.4-FORE STREET



HUT NO.21-FORE STREET



HUT NO.2-FORE STREET



HUT NO.3-FORE STREET



HUT NO.20-FORE STREET



HUT NO.117-EXETER



SICK BAY — EXETER



SHORE PATROL



PERSONNEL OFFICE



COMMISSARY — CAMP EFFORD



SICK BAY — FORE STREET



STEVEDORE OFFICE — EXETER



SHIPS STORE — FORE STREET



SAIL LOFT — CAMP EFFORD



POST OFFICE — EXETER



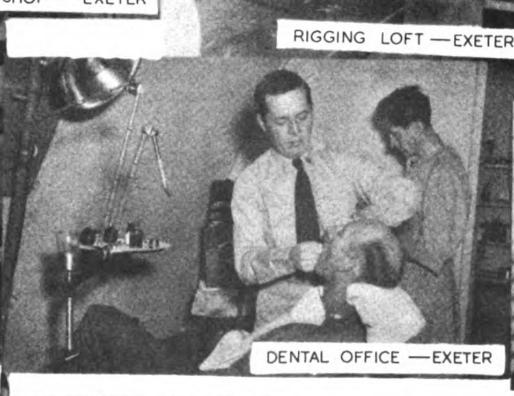
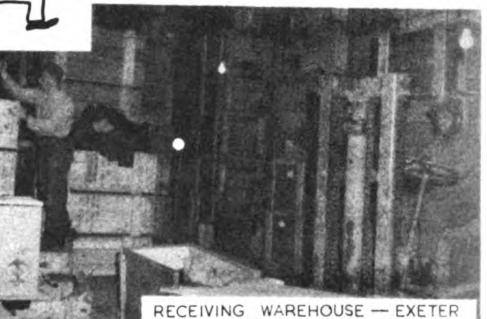
TRANSPORTATION & STEVEDORE OFFICE — FORE STREET



BLACKSMITH SHOP — EXETER



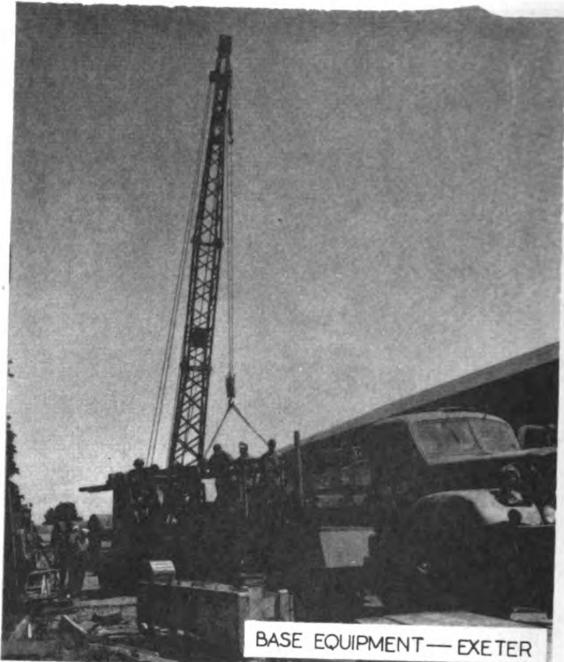
TRANSPORTATION — CAMP EFFORD



# WORK



MOVING GENERATOR — CAMP EFFORD



BASE EQUIPMENT — EXETER



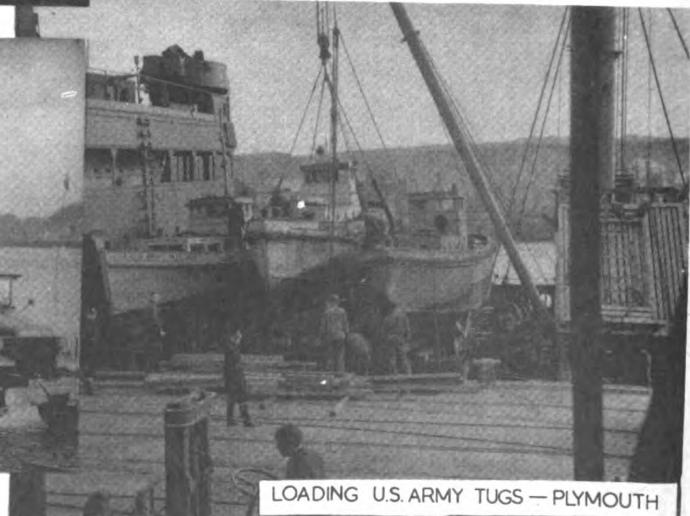
HOLD STOWAGE — LST



ORDNANCE SALVAGE — S.S. JAVA



LOADING LST — TURNCHAPEL HARD



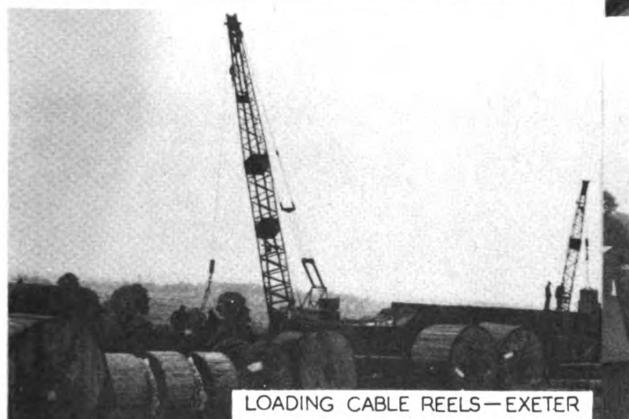
LOADING U.S. ARMY TUGS — PLYMOUTH



AROUND THE CLOCK — CAMP EFFORD



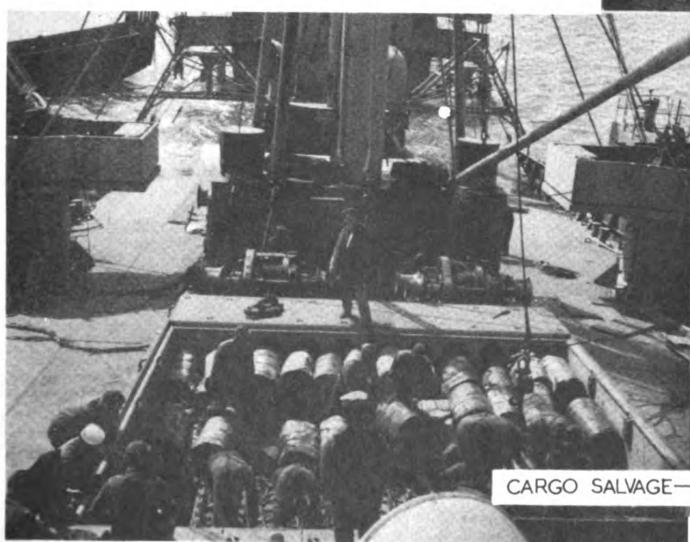
WORK AT TRACKS — EXETER



LOADING CABLE REELS — EXETER



HIGHWAY FREIGHT

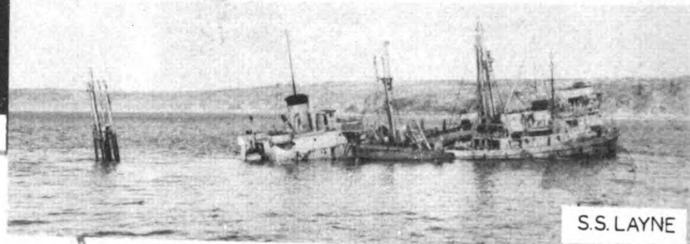


CARGO SALVAGE — S.S. LAYNE

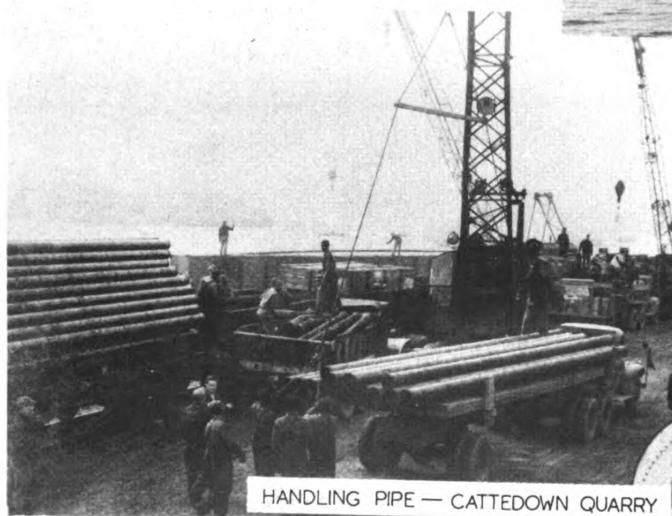




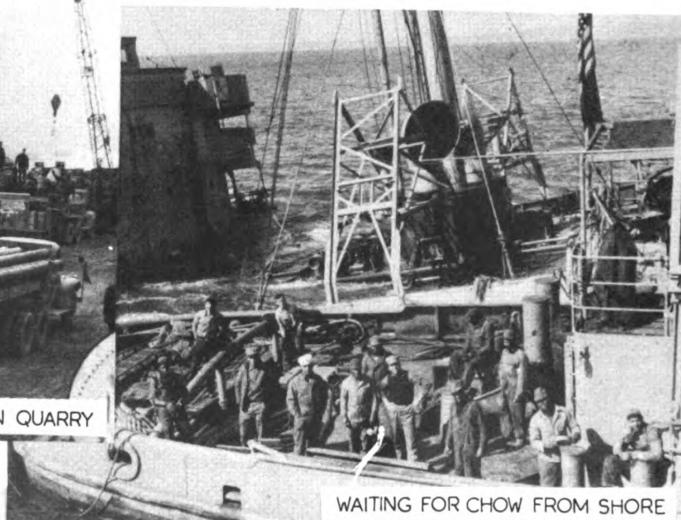
LOADING GOODS WAGONS — EXETER



S.S. LAYNE



HANDLING PIPE — CATTEDOWN QUARRY



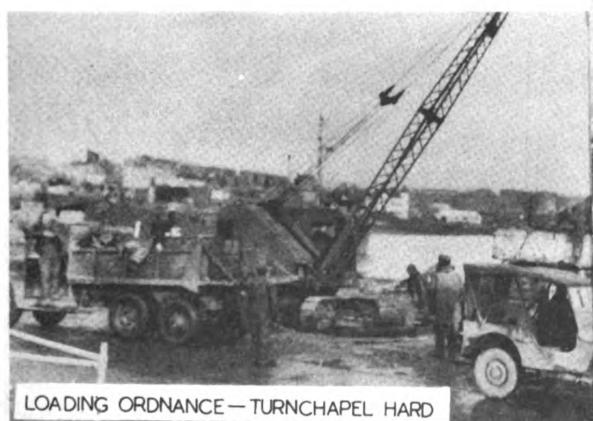
WAITING FOR CHOW FROM SHORE

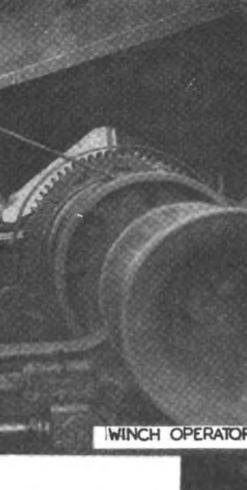
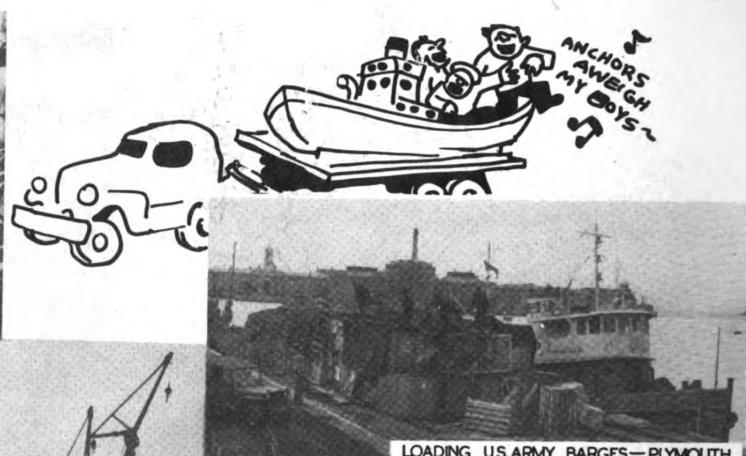


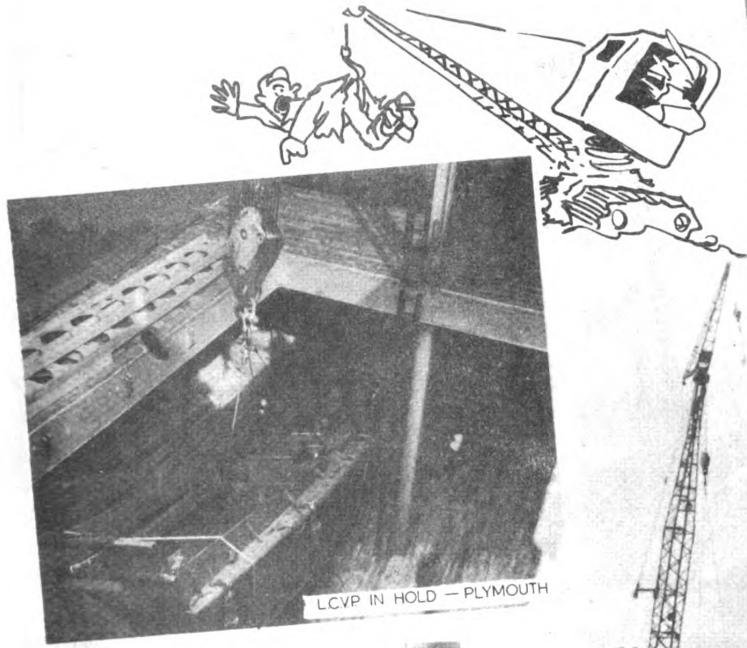
HUT MATERIAL — HAWKERLAND VALLEY



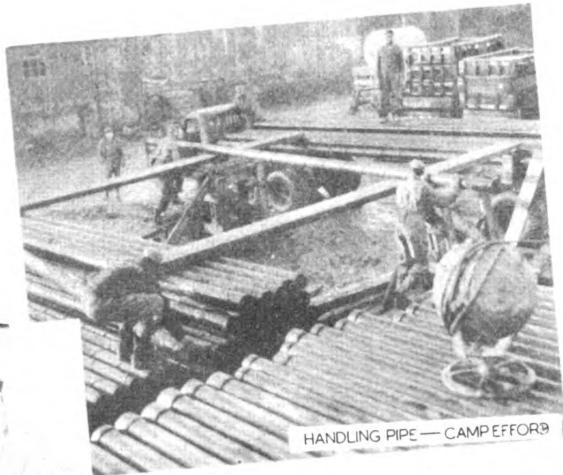
CAMP IMPROVEMENTS — EFFORD







LCVP IN HOLD — PLYMOUTH



HANDLING PIPE — CAMP EFFORD



LONG TOM — S.S. JAIA



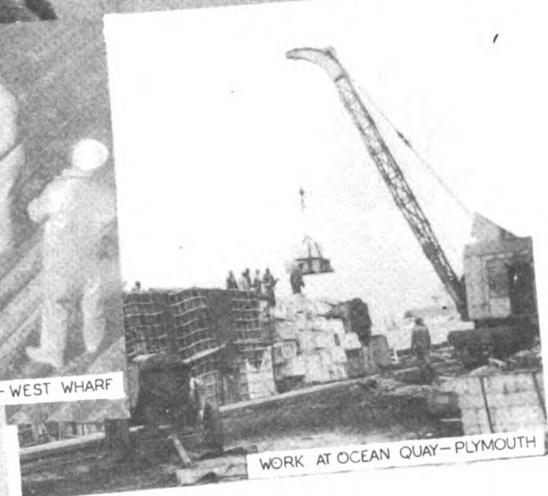
WORK AT TRACKS — EXETER



SMALL LIFTS — EXETER



PIPE STOWAGE — WEST WHARF



WORK AT OCEAN QUAY — PLYMOUTH



SEA MULE SALVAGE — CATTEDOWN



LOADING BARGES — PLYMOUTH



LOADING TRUCKS — HAWKERLAND



SWING QUARTETTE



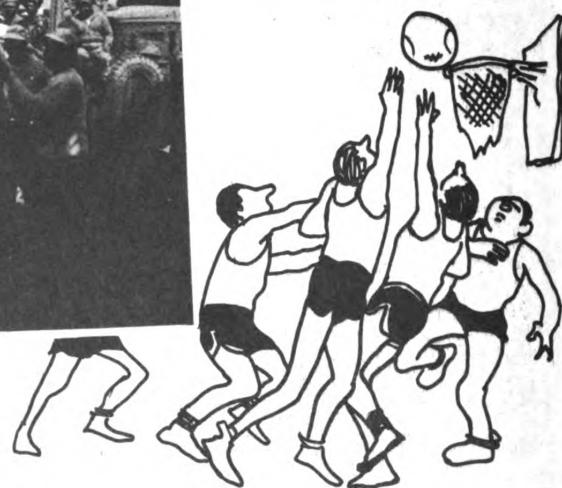
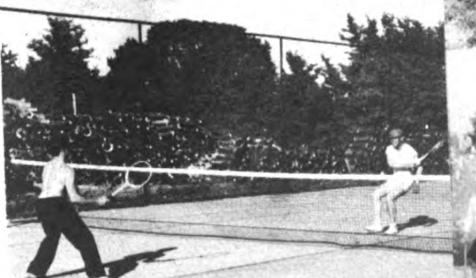
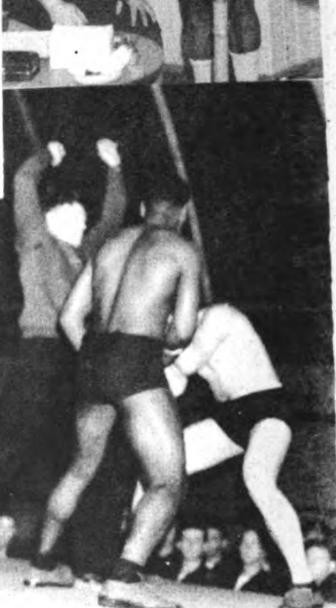
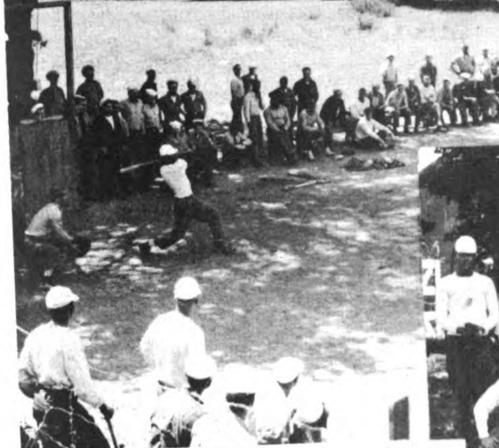
SPIRITUAL QUARTETTE

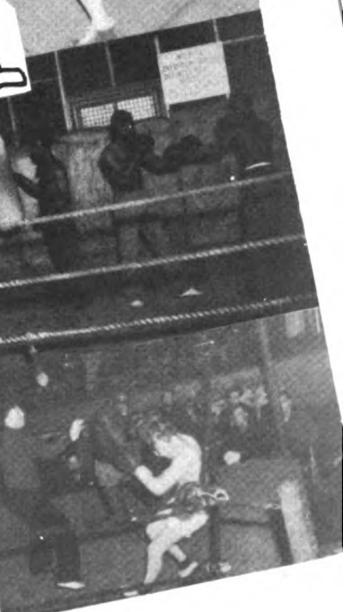
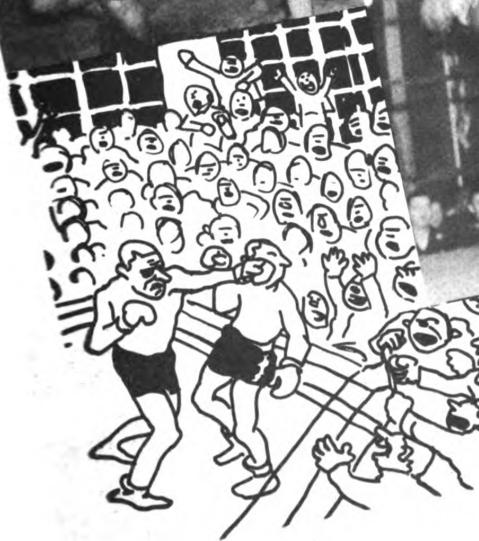
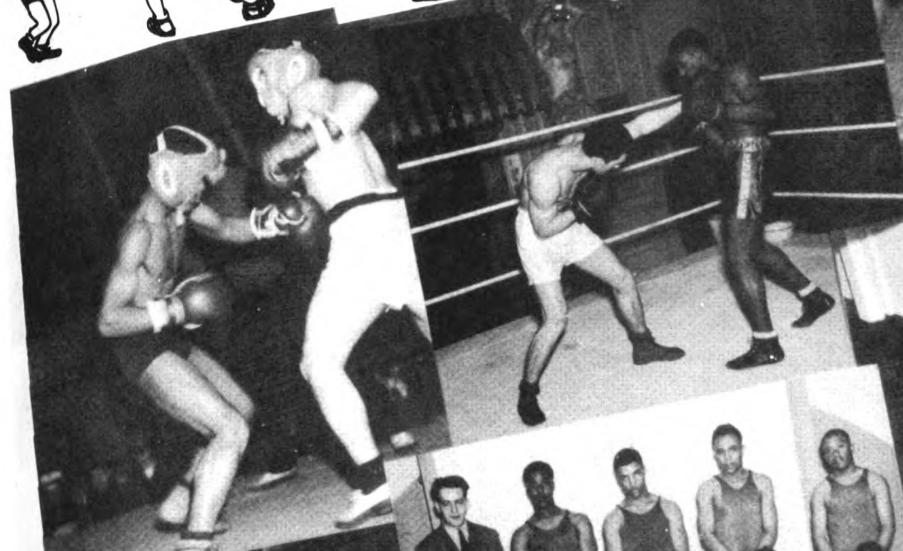
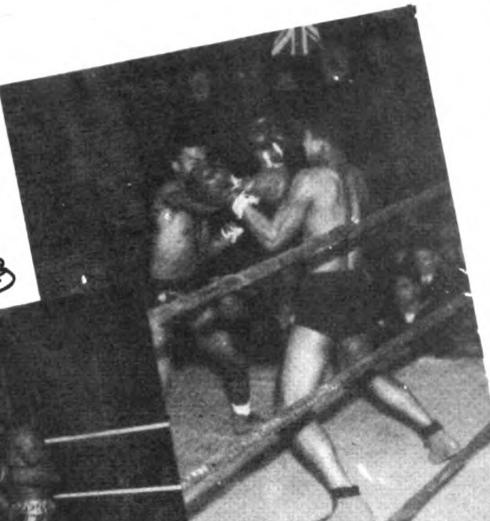


# RECREATION



# SPORTS

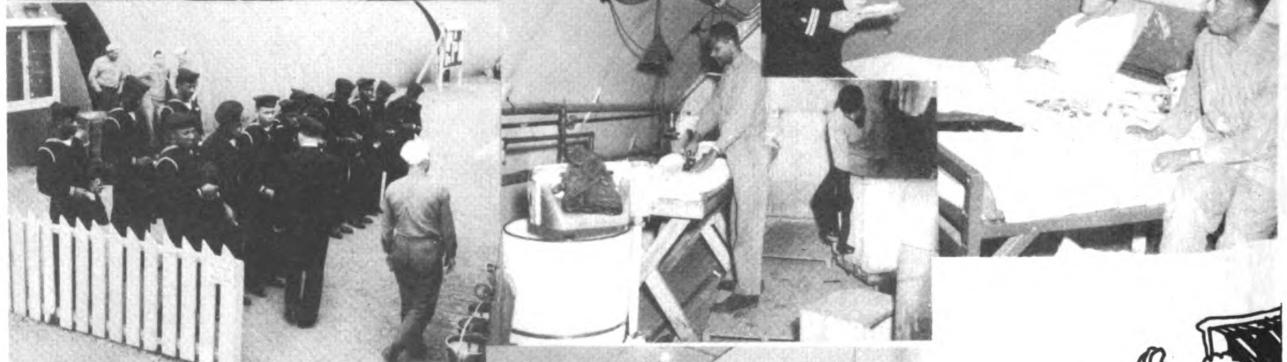
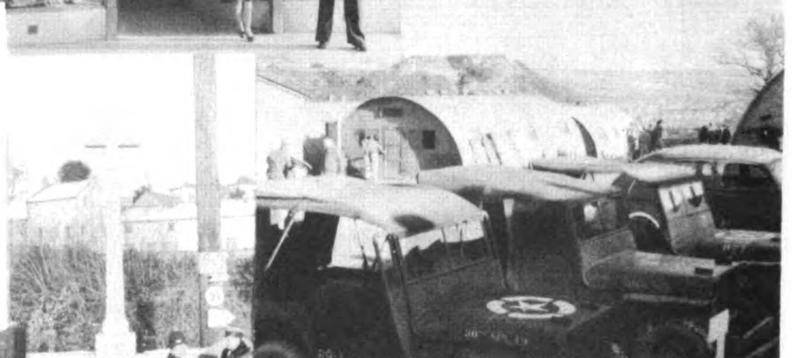


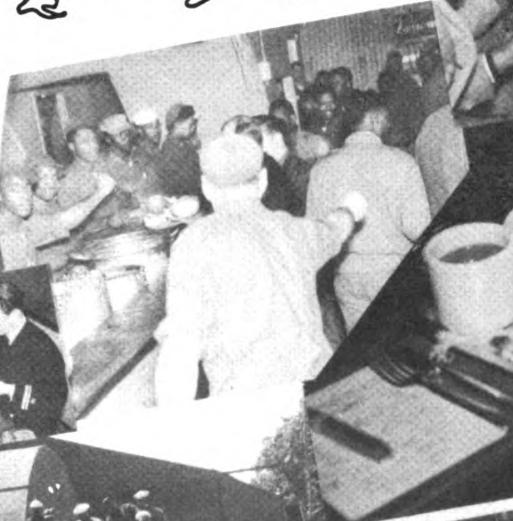


# CAMP LIFE

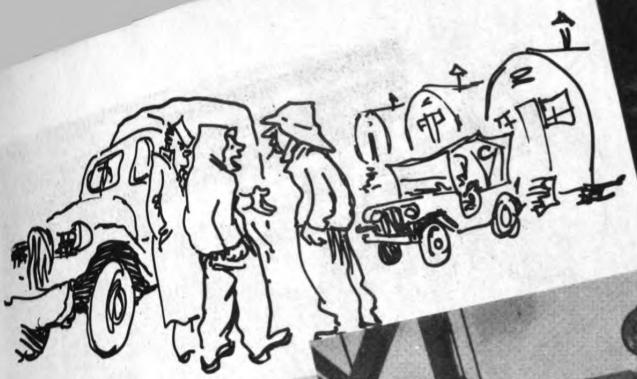






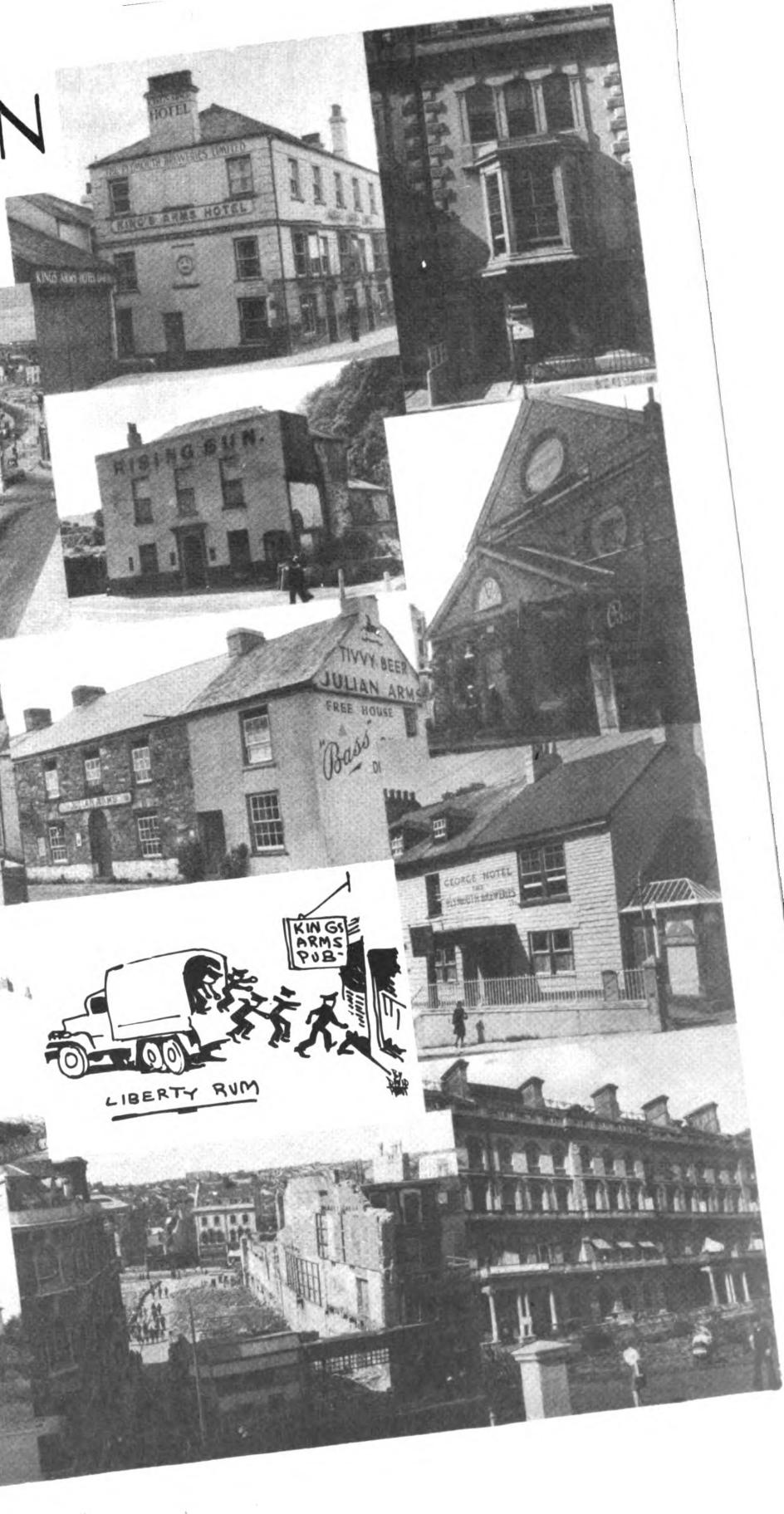




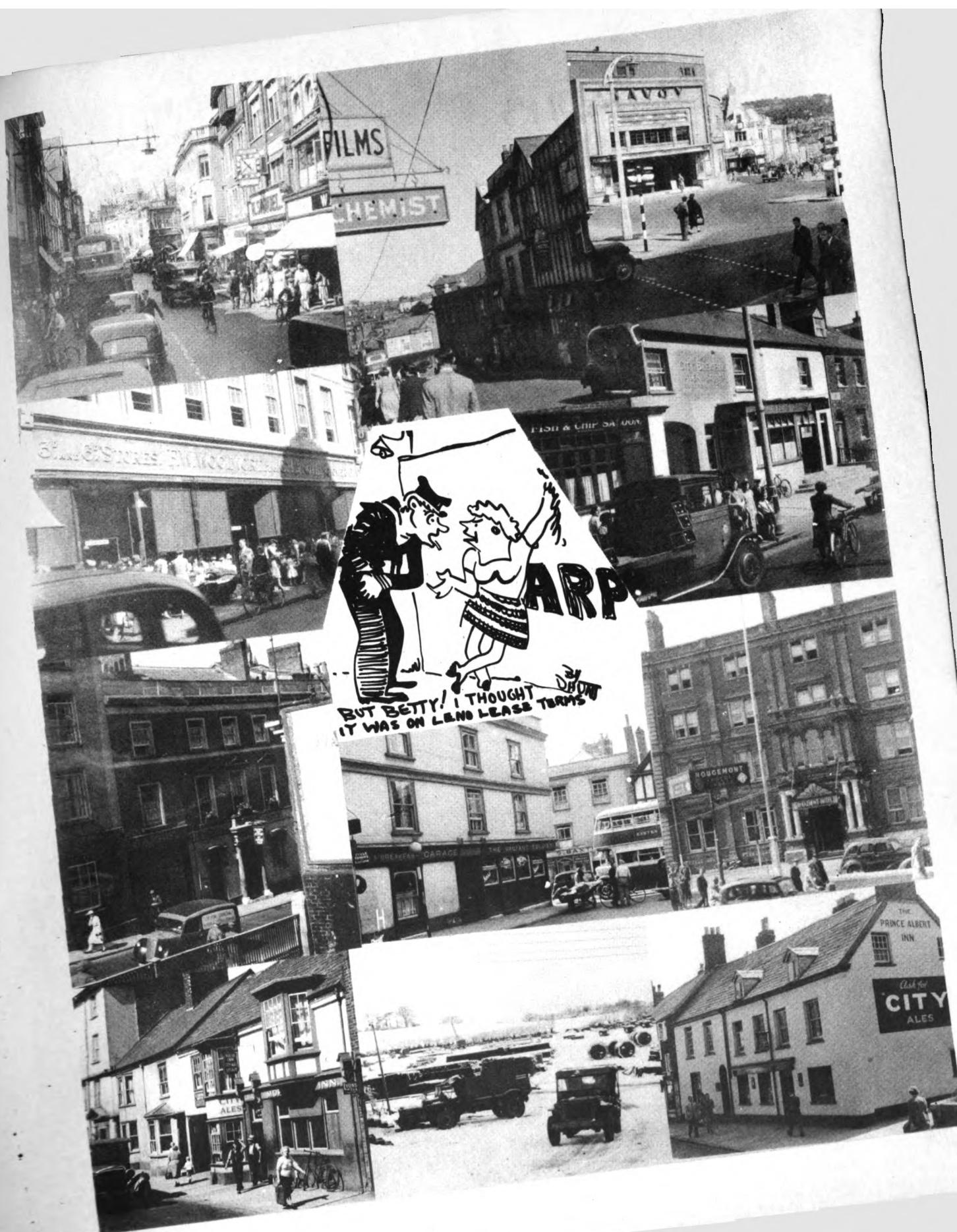




# ABOUT TOWN











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